

C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORIES OF:-

- (i) Rev. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe and his family,
pioneers of modern education in Kashmir *
- (ii) The Then Teachers Fraternity of the C. M. S.
Schools, Srinagar, our "GURUS" *
- (iii) The Then members of my Family (particularly
those who visited the Wular Lake with me) *

* WHO ARE NO MORE.

A TRAGEDY OF THE WULAR LAKE

APRIL 11, 1934.

AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

TRILOKI NATH ZALPURI

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C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.

MRS. & REV. CANON C.E. TYNDALE BISCOE, M.A. (Bradfield and Jesus college, Camb.)



Photo: MAHATTA PHOTOGRAPHY, NEW DELHI

C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.
SEVEN(FIVE TEACHERS & TWO OLD BOYS) YOUTHS SNATCHED BY DEATH IN THE
WULAR LAKE STORM TRAGEDY ON 11.4.1934



NANA KOUL



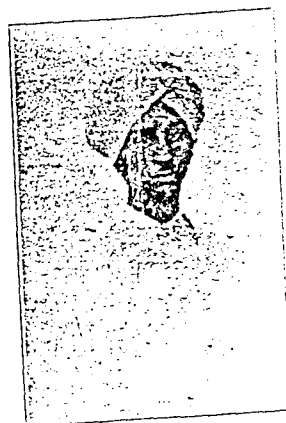
JAGAR NATH LANGROO



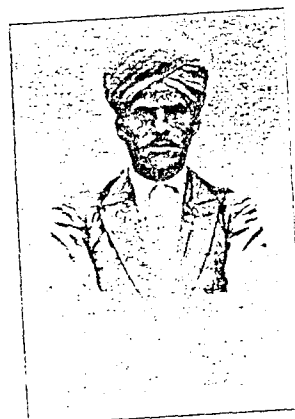
DINA NATH PANDITH



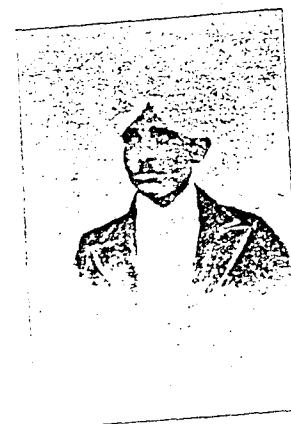
TARA CHAND GANJU



SHAMBO NATH KHOSA



MADHSUDHAN DHAR



DINA NATH WARIKOO

The gallant seven who faced a super storm on the Wular Lake and perished in their fight. They were defeated, but through their deaths many a Hindu widow will be enabled to re-marry and her children permitted to live

PHOTO: SCHOOL LOG (1934-25)

C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.

EULOGY.

WE'LL FACE THE STORMS TODAY

The clouds are banked on the mountains, the Wuilar is dull and grey.
'We'll hoist the sail, and brave the gale. Come! Out and launch away.'
'We'll face the storms today.'

The white-winged gulls are wheeling, they glint in the murky air,
As far below they see them go, the waves of the Wuilar to dare.
To face the storms out there.

How did it happen? There's none can tell, save the gulls, the wind and
wave.
'Oh Shukr Din!¹ Had you ever seen such a fight 'twixt the strong and
the brave?'
'Come fight, for there's none to save.'

The flimsy craft is swallowed up; they're whipped with the spray and
the rain.
With gasping breath they face their death, as they tussle and wrench
and strain.
'Come, heave her up again.'

At last the task's accomplished, the boat's afloat once more.
But out of the crew remain but two; no rudder or sail or oar.
They fought, but they fight no more.

'Come, what shall we do, my captain? Can we reach the shore alive?'
'I care no more to reach the shore. We only two survive.'
'But what of the other five?'

'No, perish the thought,' he answered, 'for this we were not born.'
'They fought our fight. Have we the right to leave them alone forlorn?'
'Come, meet them beyond the dawn.'

When the wild wind lashes the water, and life is a stormy sea,
'In All Things Men' is our watchword then. And may it always be,
'Come, face the storms with me.'

Let the thunder crash in the mountains. Let the lightning hiss in the
rain.
We'll never forget the example they set in our sorrow, our trouble and
pain.

But we'll face the storms again,
And again,
We'll face the storms again.

¹ *Shukr Din*, a saint's tomb on a hill-top overlooking the lake, to
which travellers pray for a safe crossing.

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I. INTRODUCTION

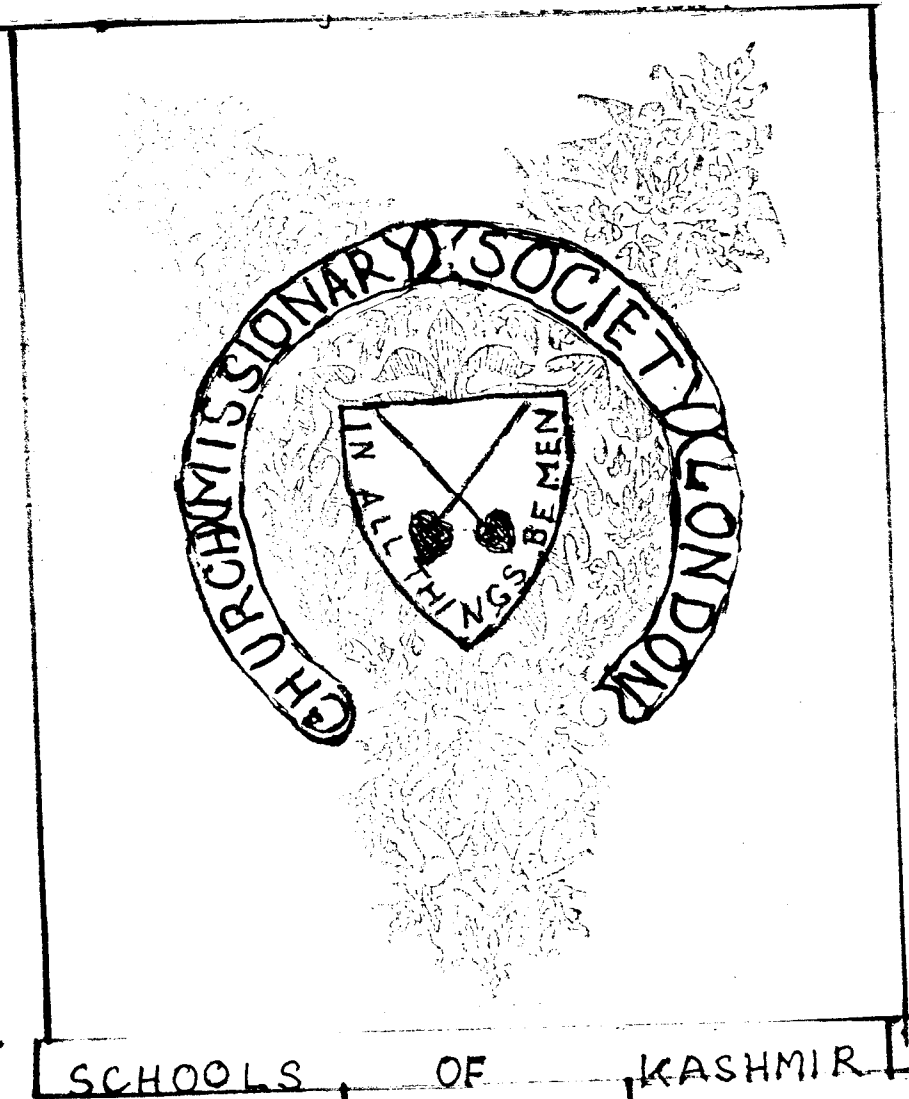
[The subject topic as well as some details involved in the events were touched upon in the Esteemed Journal - KASHUR SAMACHAR - for the months of May and October, 2000, and January 2001. The related extracts would be repeated in this treatise later at an appropriate place to judge the exact position. Since February, 1997, I had been feeling latent inquisitiveness, being an eye-witness to the "unfortunate" event, to render the step by step and point by point ^{account}. Then, I had made hard efforts to get the requisite information from the source, but, unfortunately, I could not succeed. However, a stage reached when the position changed its course for better, when, as per chance, I met Mr. Duerika Nath Kaul, a member of our School Alumni and the Son of Late Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul ('Nana Batuk'), the then veteran Boatswain of one of the Six-Oared Boats which got engulfed in the stormed Wular Lake on 11.4.1934. As he knew my longing desire of recording the eye-witness account of the whole episode, I again requested him for the said back ground material. Indelited, I would naturally remain to him, as he managed to get, within a week or so, photostat copies of the relevant papers. Further, he ^{also} attempted to arrange, as beseeched by me, the required extracts (intended to be used in the write-up) from a deep faint (due to ageing) photograph of my 5th Primary Class (only precious remains of my school days for all other articles including numerous School photographs etc. were destroyed in our Rainawari residential house because of militancy of nineties of the last century still prevalent in Kashmir). This photograph, inter-alia embodied the images of i) Late Mr. Nana Batuk and Late Mr. Rugh Nath Zalpuri, my Father, (died in 1937), who (with others, perhaps, names not known) was assigned an important role, by Late Rev. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, of escorting the drowned (dead) body(ies) from the Wular Lake site to Noor Bagh (Chhatabal Cremation Ground) in the reverse current direction for their last rites. But Mr. Kaul was not successful to have the photos ^{extract} copied out. With this position in my mind, instantly a memorable flash - a scene before my eyes of

M/s Mohatta Photography Connaught Place, New Delhi, (established originally at the Bund, Srinagar). Here Late Mr. Eric Biscoe, the Second Son of Late Rev. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe and the Headmaster of the then Sheikh Bagh Preparatory School, a sister concern of our Schools viz. C.M.S. Schools of Kashmir, used to stay on his Delhi visits (revealed to me by Mr. Eric on his wife's and his visit to me in 1959 at my Moti Bagh residence - then on his ^{ensuing} departure to New Zealand, their last residence). When I entered the Company's premises in Connaught Place, I was advised to meet their Manager - Mr Madan Mehta, who happened to be Mr. (Junior) Biscoe's one of the students and also the Class-mate of Mr. Hugu (his Son). I introduced myself to him and explained to him the purpose of my visit. I was surprised to find in him the extra-ordinary affectionate treatment meted out to me, naturally, because of my being the student of the Teaching Fraternity imbibing in us the culture of 'Kashmiriyat'. He accepted the challenge with full enthusiasm at his command and did produce clear photo copies, as per my requirement. Leaving cost factor aside, his sincere efforts brought a cheer on my face as I felt myself in a comfortable position because I could record now my rendering easily. Later, I showed the photographs to Mr. D.N. Kaul, who was, in turn, immensely happy. Convinced do I feel here that when the reader goes through this essay, he too will feel satisfied with the relevant impressions taken out from the said old (of 67 years now) and faint photograph. Therefore, both Mr. Kaul and me will remain obliged to Mr. Madan for his successful attempts.

Before I start rendering this sad narration, I consider it pertinent to say a few introductory lines on the C.M.S. Schools of Kashmir. Here I cannot depend on any written Text like "Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade" by C.E. Tyndale Biscoe or a similar record as I have never gone through one, but can only tax my faded memory. One day when boys gathered in Primary Classes Hall of the Central (Fateh Kadal) School for prayer etc., Sr. Biscoe entered the Hall. We stood up in a hush silence ^{as a mark of welcome and respect to the Principal} and sat down on the wooden floor, as per Headmaster's instruction.

. Then, as I recollect now, he gave a lecture wherein he first mentioned about London and its schools around. By and by he turned to the topic of his travel to Kashmir. His speech in simpler words conveyed that during the last decade of the nineteenth Century, he was deputed by the 'CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY', LONDON, to take up 'EDUCATION'.

ACTIVITIES" in Kashmir. Perhaps, --- he reached Srinagar in 1898 or so. As is revealed in 'Nasid' of All India Kashmiri Samaj (Issue January-February 1999 page 8), it was Rev. Doxey, who opened the Missionary School in Kashmir first in 1881. He was followed by Rev. Knowles, who installed Pt. Anand Koul Bamzai as the first head master of the school in 1893. It appeared as if God had ordained so. One is thrilled to note that so fortunate were they, that they successfully at that point of time established by and by a net-work of Schools (HIGH - Central and Anantnaghi; MIDDLE - Rainawrie and Sheikh Bagh; PRIMARY - Habba Kadal and Nause Kadal), numbering 6 in all. They gave these Schools a reputed and respectable 'MOTTO' - "IN ALL THINGS BE MEN" focussing on three ("body", "mind" and "soul") ingredients of human beings. It depicted two paddles, in crossed position meaning "SACRIFICE" to secure safety for others; for did not Lord Jesus Christ offer himself for sacrifice as a saviour of humanity. It is heartening to see the 'LOGO' of our 'MOTTO' as under



SCHOOLS OF KASHMIR

SUCCESSOR

TYNDALE BISOP & MALLINSON EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

SRINAGAR

DIOCESE OF AMRITSAR, CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA

In the course of narration of this account, I have attempted to describe the House-Boat, Doonga & Shikara with their details of interior space designing for their proper usage. Similarly, I have provided you with a kin characteristic on twelve - Oared, 2 Sm - Oared and one Silvery (White) Four - Oared boats. Though this may appear to be redundant for the people of the contemporary age and those immediately following them, yet I feel it necessary for the third generation and onwards for Kashmiri Pandits generally, who may, perhaps, not have any chance to resettle / return to Kashmir, their mother land, what to speak of the said boats being enjoyed by them. Of course, such persons may be able to see photographic sketches in print or audio-^{visual} media but not virtually their inner cubicle divisions for the desired utilisation.

(7) During my busy time with preparation of this synopsis, one day I came across an interview given by Prof. (Mrs.) Hasina Hashia, Department of Geography, University of Jamia Millia Islamia, in the Times of India, New Delhi. (She is also a Member of the Indian Muslim Women's Personal Law Board). I posted a letter to her address for certain help in this endeavour. Immediately I received a prompt and cooperative response from her. Later I met her personally and got a few doubts cleared and also procured through her a reference book "SYSTEMATIC GEOGRAPHY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR" by Prof. Majid Hussain, presently a Senior Professor of the Department of Geography of the same University. (Earlier he happened to be the Head of the Department of Geography in the North-East Hill University and University of Kashmir and Jama Millia Islamia). Indeed, I am very grateful to Drs. Hasina and Majid for their learned advice. To Prof. Majid I am highly indebted for allowing me to quote certain references from his book.

There was another important source in my mind about whom I have specified the position now. Constant liaison with him proved fruitful. It was tackled through Mr D.N. Kaul, who happened to be in touch with the said

the said source - Mr. C.H. Tyndale Biscoe S/o Late Eric Tyndale Biscoe, presently resident of Australia. The latter was contacted (through e-mail) and requested to arrange sending 'Log Book' for 11. 4. 1934, the day of occurrence of the catastrophe. (Now it is received and I have placed it in the end) But redeeming feature which I cannot but express to the Reader in this regard is that I avoided abridging the Log to load my essay only with the requisite and to the point lines thereof, because I felt it necessary for Kashmiri Pandits, in general, to be aware of the political controversies, shortcomings in their social code prevalent in their inner circles, the suppression of minority rights practised and the terror unleashed by communal forces through hard core miscreants then in vogue in Kashmir.

Pertinent point to mention here is that Mr. Hugh evinces interest even now in the C.M.S. Schools' topics, as and when their mention is made. Definitely I am thankful to him for making available to me the Log required. I hope he will continue to assist us, whenever we need it at the time of recording of topics on the C.M.S. School etc.

I will fail in my duty if I do not offer my sincere obligation to Mr. D. N. Kaul S/o Late Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul, who did check this manuscript and also made certain suggestions which were incorporated in this essay.

My eye witness account pertains to the gloomy event that took place on 11. 4. 1934 (about 67 years back). So, I feel it necessary to have no hesitation in admitting that there might be certain shortcomings in it. If so, I will crave for the Readers' forgiveness. Further, in case, it is found any part of this composition, written in good faith, hurting the peoples' feelings, to them I offer my sincerest apologies, in advance.]

II - TEXT OF THE EYE - WITNESS ACCOUNT

Come the months of March / April every year, Kashmir, the land of hills and mountains, flora and fauna, springs and lakes, with majestic shady trees emanates fresh and cool breeze. In March every year right at the foot of the Hari Parbat hillock (in Srinagar) on one side almonds did burst in blossoms, turning the fields into vast sheets of pink and white. Nature has it - the flowers come before the leaves which is known as "Yasuman Phullai" in Kashmiri. On the other side of the hillock, Dal Lake with vast stretch of waters presented a smiling and a beautiful scene. On the bank of this lake, the Moghul Gardens, like - Shalimar and Nishat; Springs - i.e. Cheshma Shahi, Ishukher etc. with water canals dazzling in the sunshine in the middle, beautiful and grand trees full of flower blossoms and vast lengths of colourful flowers do present a picturesque sight. Towards the north and south, the mountainous ranges of Mahadev, Zabarwan etc. looked as if they were the sentinels for Srinagar. Equally fascinating was the charm of the meadows at Gulmarg, Khelemarg, Sonamarg, and Yusoo-

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marg etc. The visitors from overseas and India come for enjoyment. As regards locals, the couples along with their children dressed up in colourful costumes too move out for entertainment to the said places. The Kashmiri Pandits, however, celebrate the festivals of 'Navareh' (ushering in of the New Year) and 'Baisakhi' on the slopes/bottom of the Hari Parvat hillock / Ishabher (spring) near Nishat Garden respectively. On their part, the C.M.S. Schools also used to move out to the Wular Lake for enjoyment as well as for conducting swimming competition by way of crossing this Lake. This competition was confined to the Teachers/Students. The names of successful competitors with the detail of ^{the} related year used to be listed on the 'Honour Boards' then exhibited in the Central (Fateh Kadal) school Hall. The winners used to be given unique 'honour' by suffixing to their names 'Wular Crossed' in the C.M.S. Schools Annual Day ^{or on similar occasions like the yearly character rolls covering a boy's body, mind and 'soul' activities assessment awarded by the Principal to the latter.} As it was destined for us too to witness the sorrowful event - when seven youths (teachers & ^{lost} old boys) ^{lost} their lives on 11.4.1934, we joined the group headed by Mrs. & Rev. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, Principal, in a House-Boat, also followed by Mr. Fredrick Jacob, Vice Principal, Miss Mallinson, Principal of C.M.S. Girls' School, Srinagar, Teachers' Group(s) and our family - all in Doongas. There was a retinue of other back-stroke boats and a mechanised (motor launch, as it was called) ^{boat} going by their census, I now give their description. There was one Twelve-Oared Boat captained by Mr. Nand Lal Bakaya, a Senior Teacher, with its rudder in his control, two Six-Oared Boats, one with Boatswain as Mr. Nanuk Chand Kaul and the other (the name of its captain not stored in my memory now), One Four-Oared white (silver) Boat, placed at the disposal of Mr. Jacob. While the motor launch (Driver - Mr. Tara Chand Zalpuri, my uncle) was used for plying the House-Boat, particularly on the occasions of storms or in the case of reverse-current direction travel, the Twelve-Oared Boat helped the Doongas when in movement in difficulties. All these boats were utilised for joy rides also, where-as in the Sailing Boat, ladies like Mrs. Biscoe and Miss Mallinson enjoyed their evenings sometimes in this Boat. For the comprehension of the readers, I have tried to give exploratory details - about a few of the boats that move in lakes / rivers / streams which cater to our

needs on our water travel in the footnote below.

1) and 2) — House Boat and Doonga

Both are made of wood. Both of them ~~are~~^{are} constructed in such a ^{way} that they form several cubicles used as Drawing / Dressing / Dining / Bed rooms with their floor level much above the water surface level outside their enclosed area. Their kitchens (pantry) is kept in stern area above the bottom water surface level. Important among all rooms is the Store Room between the lower surface level of the rooms and over the bottom surface level of boats. Sometimes Doongas / shikaras served as kitchens for the House Boats, whereas the shikaras at times catered as kitchens for Doongas. The House-Boats have flat roofs furnished with chairs and tables and decorated with flower vases. These roofs are, in turn, covered by printed tapestry cloth, while sides have curtains hung abroad. In this way roof portion avoids the bright and the hot Sun. A suitable stair case is constructed so that the people can climb it and enjoy themselves in the roof-portion. The Doongas, in turn, have the sloping roofs of wooden planks, covered with mats of special type of grass. For plying the House Boat, its two sides lengthwise are equipped with two platforms of about two feet width. The two boatmen ^{while walking on platforms} ~~on either side~~ push the House Boat forward by applying force ^{through} poles (with smooth and slippery circumference) of which one end is stuck in the Lake / River bottom with pressure and the other held close to the chest. Actually Newton's third law of motion comes into play here. The forward direction of the House Boats is also guided with help of

the other Boatman controlling the steering. Pt. Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal' in his article "Swami Ramji Mahamesheshwaracharya" (KUSBOR SAMACHAR - SPECIAL NUMBER 1979 - page 37) states "In fact, Shri Narayan Das was first to introduce house-boat in Kashmir. Among Kashmiris, he was, therefore known as 'Narah Naran'".

3) Shikara

It is also made of wood. The shikaras used by visitors / travellers have a sort of a 'parandah' - closed space with a roof and curtains on two side. The shikaras for enjoyment - use have very bright and dazzling tapestry around the 'parandah', whereas the front and back portions are kept open. On the back portion, the boatmen with paddles and seated on one/two seats drive the shikaras to the required destination, control ^{regulation} & regulation in the

so far

I have dwelt only with the position of 'Boat-Group' heading for the Wular Lake. Now, I will take up the topic of our journey to the Lake. For this purpose, it is better that I will confine to the movement of our Doonga (to be supplemented later about the others as and when they appear on the scene) as the others started from various locations, unknown to me.

Come now, it is the turn of our Doonga and its forward journey. Apropos our Doonga, mention of its 14 members travelling therein (two members (Mr. Rugh Nath, my father and Mr. Nila Kanth, my uncle stayed back) is (8)

hands of the steerer. There is another type of shikara. It has no 'param-dah' nor roofed area in it. Its boatman with a paddle is both a steerer & a flyer. This shikara. It is generally known as 'DEMB' NAV (in Kashmiri) used by vegetable vendors, fish sellers or horticulture sellers. Sometimes, fruit and dals (pulses) are also sold with the help of this kind of a shikara.

4. Twelve - Oared Boat

It is an impressive and a grand moving structure on the water surface being paddled by twelve persons, sitting in pairs in six seats of the boat. The paddles are long, huge and weighty. The Boatswain is seated on the hind seat facing the twelve paddlers seated in his front. He holds the rudder in his hand. Then, the rudder used to fly two (Union and Maharaja's) flags. The salutes often given were in the form of all paddlers in standing positions with their paddles held straight vertically pointing towards the sky.

5. Six - Oared Boats (Two)

My presumption is, if it is correct, that both the boats were on the pattern used by the Cambridge and Oxford Universities in their annual racing competitions in the Thames River (London). Yearly, we used to witness photographs of these racing boats when exhibited on the 'News Boards' of the central (Fateh-kadal) school. The delicacy of this boat is that both sides were approximately of the width of not more than six inches. The salutes, whenever given were similar to those of the Twelve - Oared Boat.

6. Four Oared white (silver) Boat

It was a tiny boat being plied by two persons, each holding a pair of paddles in their hands. As both the persons paddled rhythmatically and cautiously there was no rudder as aimed direction was itself maintained.

found imperative, as certain events, which I will narrate later at the appropriate moments, revolve round them. They constituted one and the same family but belonging to four sub-divisions i.e.,

A) Mr. Tara Chand - my eldest uncle and the head, his son, Mr. Narian Too, my Cousin Brother; his daughter, my Cousin Sister with an infant girl - all about 47, 17 & 17 years of age respectively.

B) Mrs. Radha Rani, my mother, her three (Triloki Nath - self, Hriday Nath and Ram Nath) Sons and daughter, Oma, then ^{about} 32, 9, 7, 4 & 1½ years respectively.

C) Mr. Dwarika Nath, (then about 7 years old) s/o Mr. Aftab Ram (my second uncle) who used to reside separately away from our residential house at Rainawara.

D) Mrs. Leela Vati (w/o Mr. Nila Kanth) my aunt, with her three (Ms. Chaanda, Mohini and Kishni) daughters of about 7, 5 & 3 years of age respectively.

(Here, I must tell you that ^{among all of them,} the survivors now are — Self, Dwarika Nath, Oma, Kishni and infant girl (presently 67 years old) and the rest have left for their heavenly abode.)

The Doonga topic is over; now let us come to important aspect of forward journey. While our residential house is at Karapom Khushki, our Doonga had cast its anchor at a certain convenient point in "Kralayar Nalla" in Bagoleji Mohalla basti. So, first task undertaken was to move all the articles of day to day use like — bedding, utensils, eatables etc. to Doonga. When this work was finished, the articles etc. were stored and floors of the cubicles were set.

The Doonga started off, perhaps on 7. 4. 1934 (exact date now not in my memory), from the "Kralayar Nalla" point. Let me call it First Day's — First Leg travel. As soon as the Doonga moved, both the Ladies chanted some prayers, and as is customary with the Hindus (particularly Kashmiri Pandits) they offered handfuls of rice ^{with coars} to the stream (Varun Devta - water God) from both sides of the Doonga. The boat sped forward when, after covering some distance we left behind Shiva Temple of Kralayar. The onward March through various